

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicant's Claim for Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and for the acknowledgment of Applicant's Information Disclosure Statement by return of the Form PTO-1449. Applicant also notes that the Examiner has not indicated that the drawings have been approved by the Official Draftsperson on a Form PTO-948. The Examiner is thus requested to indicate that Applicant's drawings are acceptable in the next Official Action.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4 and 7.

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 18, and 19 will have been amended, claims 2-6 will have been canceled, and newly presented claims 23-38 will have been added. Accordingly, claims 1 and 7-38 are currently pending. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and allowance of claims 1 and 7-38 in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

The Examiner has objected to claim 1 for minor informalities. In particular, the Examiner states that "apart" should be changed to --a part--. Applicant agrees that the claim should contain "a part", as stated by the Examiner. However, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as filed, contains "a part" (not "apart") and therefore it is believed that no amendment is required.

Apparently in the copy of claim 1 as filed, "a part" appears to the Examiner as one word (although it does not appear as such to Applicant). The Examiner's attention is directed to the claim listing above, in which the phrase "a part" appears clearly in the freshly printed copy of claim 1. Accordingly, in view of the above noted remarks, it is believed that the objection to the specification is not appropriate, and Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding objection.

The Examiner has rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs. Claim 2 has been canceled. Accordingly, in view of the above noted amendments and remarks, it is believed that the rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraphs, is now moot.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JOHNSON et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,204,742). The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by CHASTAGNER (U.S. Patent No. 5,152,748).

Independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 18, and 19 have been amended to include the subject matter of claim 4 and intervening claim 3, which the Examiner has indicated contains allowable subject matter. Accordingly, in view of the above noted amendments and remarks, it is believed that the rejection of claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over JOHNSON et al. and the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over CHASTAGNER have been overcome. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §

102(b) over JOHNSON et al. and claims 1, 3, 5, 6, and 8-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over CHASTAGNER.

The Examiner has objected to claims 4 and 7 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of any intervening claims. Claim 4 has been canceled. Accordingly, it is believed that the objection to claim 4 is now moot. Claim 7 depends from claim 1, which has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 4 and intervening claim 3. Accordingly, in view of the above noted amendments and remarks, it is believed that the objection to claim 7 has been overcome, and Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding objection to claim 7.

Applicant submits that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicant's invention as recited in newly submitted claims 23-38. Newly submitted independent claims 23-25, 29, 30, 34, and 35 include the subject matter of claim 7 (which the Examiner has indicated contains allowable subject matter) added to independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 18, and 19, respectively. New dependent claims 26-28, 31-33, and 36-38 recite additional subject matter which is not taught or suggested by the prior art and are also allowable.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and an early indication of the allowance of claims 1 and 7-38.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is proper and that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicant's invention as recited in claims 1 and 7-38.

Accordingly, consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present amendment and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection base upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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